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NO. LTC # 133-2012

2012 MAY 17 PM 1: 13 LETTER TO COMMISS

TO:

Mayor Matti Herrera Bower and Members of the City Commission

FROM:

Jorge M. Gonzalez, City Manager

DATE:

May 14, 2012

SUBJECT: Award from the Florida Trust for Historic Preservation for MiMo on the Beach

website and brochure

The purpose of the LTC is to inform the Mayor and Commission that the City has won an award for outstanding achievement in Media/Education from the Florida Trust for Historic Preservation. The award is for the website and brochure entitled "MiMo on the Beach." The award ceremony will take place on Friday, May 18, 2012 at the Annual Statewide Preservation Conference in Gainesville, Florida. Joyce Meyers from the Planning Department will be accepting the award on behalf of the City.

The website, www.MiMoOnTheBeach.com, and the companion brochure are intended to educate the public about the significance of the Miami Modern style of architecture and to promote tourism. There are four historic districts featured in this material: Morris Lapidus / Mid-Twentith Century District, North Beach Resort District, North Shore National Register District and Normandy Isles National Register District. The international exposure afforded by the website should help to bring tourists and potential investment to North Beach. This is not unlike the process of education and publicity about Art Deco architecture that took place in South Beach many years ago.

The brochure is distributed to visitors in Miami Beach through the hotels and visitor information centers. While the brochure contains a brief summary of MiMo and the four historic districts, its main function is to encourage people to visit the website where they can find a plethora of information and photographs, including self-guided walking tours that they can download to explore the MiMo districts while visiting Miami Beach. There is also contact information about the monthly guided walking tour jointly sponsored by MDPL and NBDC.

This project was directed by the Planning Department with assistance from the Public Information Office and the IT Department. Graphic design and website development were provided by an outside consultant. The project was financed in part with a historic preservation grant (\$9,200) provided by the National Park Service, U.S. Department of the Interior, administered through the Bureau of Historic Preservation, Division of Historical Resources, Florida Department of State, assisted by the Florida Historical Commission. The total cash outlay by the City was \$2,543.

If you have any questions or comments, please feel free to contact me.

Attachment JMG/J⁄GG/RGL/JAM

MiMo on the Beach Website and Brochure FTHP Award Nomination

The "MiMo on the Beach" website (www.MiMoOnTheBeach.com) provides a comprehensive introduction to the tropical, resort-style form of postwar modern architecture, locally dubbed "Miami Modern" or "MiMo." It also features four historic districts in Miami Beach that contain high concentrations of MiMo style buildings, ranging from glamorous resort hotels to modest garden apartments. A companion brochure is distributed to hotel guests and visitors, encouraging them to tour the MiMo architectural districts while they are visiting South Florida, as well as to direct them to the "MiMo on the Beach" website for detailed information. The website and companion brochure were completed by the City of Miami Beach in September 2011 with assistance from a federal grant administered by the State of Florida Bureau of Historic Preservation.

The overall goals of the website and brochure are to bring public awareness to a style of architecture from the recent past that is not yet well understood or valued by the general public, to generate heritage tourism and to stimulate investment in rehabilitation of MiMo buildings. To be sure, the public has recognized and embraced the significance of a handful of iconic MiMo buildings such as the Fontainebleau and Eden Roc hotels, but appreciation lags far behind for the small tourist hotels, motels, apartments and commercial buildings that characterize the Post WW II building boom. There are estimated to be over 700 MiMo buildings in Miami Beach and many more throughout South Florida. Lack of knowledge of the significance of MiMo architecture is a major threat to contributing buildings that are not protected by local historic designation.

A particular objective of the "MiMo on the Beach" website and brochure is to shine a light on the concentration of historic MiMo architecture in the North Beach neighborhood of Miami Beach. The North Beach neighborhood, located between 63 Street and 87 Terrace, is home to three of the four MiMo districts in Miami Beach. The two largest districts, North Shore and Normandy Isles, are listed on the National Register of Historic Places, but they are not protected by local historic district designation. The North Beach neighborhood of Miami Beach has much potential to become successful for both the residents and business owners, much like the successful economic revitalization of South Beach following the National Register recognition of the Art Deco district. The Normandy Isles and North Shore National Register historic districts contain a population that is predominantly Hispanic and low-to-moderate income. Most businesses are locally owned minority businesses. Shining light onto this neighborhood will present opportunities for entrepreneurs to tap into an underserved market and encourage locals and tourists to visit the neighborhood and support the businesses. The website and brochure are part of an overall strategy to generate community awareness and pride in the special character and sense of place that is created by the MiMo buildings. That strategy also includes events, tours, lectures, articles in magazines and newspapers, and a MiMo exhibit consisting of eighteen graphic panels that are displayed at various events and public spaces.

"MiMo on the Beach" approaches the challenges of public education with the tag line, "Futuristic, Flamboyant and Fun." It uses sharp period-themed graphics, vivid photos and appealing narrative to capture the viewer's imagination. The "MiMo 101" page on the website not only describes

what MiMo architecture is, but it relates it to the context of the popular culture of the 1950s and 1960s, capitalizing on the current popularity of "Retro" design in the fashion, furnishings, television and movie arenas.

The website contains a wide breadth and depth of information that is efficiently organized for the viewer. Casual visitors to the website may simply enjoy the photos and graphics or find maps and MiMo tour information. More motivated viewers can find in-depth information about the MiMo style, the districts, individual buildings, prominent architects, preservation resources and news. There is an extensive glossary of MiMo architectural terms that is cross-referenced by hotlinks throughout the website. There are photo galleries and links to the district designation reports for each MiMo district. To supplement the one monthly guided tour offered in the North Shore District, there are self-guided tours for each of the four MiMo districts that can be downloaded and printed for visitors to use at any time.

The visual imagery, variety and layers of information on the website are designed to appeal to local residents and property owners as well as to an international audience. As noted previously, one objective is to motivate property owners and/or potential investors to preserve and rehabilitate MiMo buildings; another is to promote heritage tourism, especially in the lesser known North Beach neighborhood. By choosing the internet as the principal vehicle for this message, the city hopes to capitalize on the international popularity of the Miami Beach, South Beach and Art Deco "brands." As people surf the internet looking for cool, hip things to do and see in South Beach, they may find "MiMo on the Beach" to be the most unexpected "futuristic, flamboyant and fun" new attraction.